

no shame.

no blame.

no names.

now there's a way to safely surrender your baby

[http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/SafelySurr_91st
_htm](http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/SafelySurr_91st.htm)

Dear Educator:

California enacted the Safely Surrendered Baby (SSB) Law January 1, 2001. The SSB Law allows a person to give up an unwanted infant legally, confidentially, and safely. I am pleased to report that this new law has already been credited with saving the lives of babies.

I encourage you to use this SSB Law Teacher Kit to educate your high school students about this new law. Your assistance in sharing this information with teenagers will help us put an end to the tragic stories of abandoned babies in California. It will also provide teens experiencing an unwanted pregnancy with an alternative that protects them from the severe consequences – both legal and emotional – of abandoning their babies. These materials are modeled after the state of New Jersey's Safe Haven Campaign. We have modified them to reflect California and to serve as guidelines to be utilized by California Educators. They can be further modified to meet your particular needs.

As you review the enclosed materials, you will see that they have been designed to do more than simply communicate the facts about the SSB Law. These resources include challenging topics and activities you can use to enrich discussion and encourage critical thinking across the curriculum.

Thank you for taking time in your classroom to communicate this important information about the SSB Law. Your commitment to the students of California is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

RITA SAENZ, Director
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

SAFELY SURRENDERED BABY LAW TEACHER KIT: OVERVIEW

This kit is designed to provide you with informative and easy-to-use classroom materials about California's new Safely Surrendered Baby (SSB) Law. You can use these resources in several ways:

- Communicate the key facts about the SSB Law to your students.
- Add depth and dimension to many areas of the curriculum (see specific suggestions on the following page).
- Encourage your students to think critically about larger issues, including the laws, ethics and personal responsibility.

<p>Inside This Kit</p> <p>Tips & Curriculum Links See following page</p> <p>Reproducible Student Handouts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions and Answers about the SSB Law • Hotlines and Resource Numbers • Worksheet: Activities and Discussion <p>Teacher Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the SSB Law • Chart: How the SSB Law Works <p>SSB Law Poster Please display at your school</p> <p>Tips for Talking About Tough Issues You may find that unwanted pregnancies and abandoned babies are difficult issues for your students. Talking about the SSB Law may evoke strong emotions or make some students feel uncomfortable. Here are a few tips to make your classroom discussions supportive and positive for your students:</p>	<p>Create a comfortable atmosphere Be open to what your students are saying and encourage them to listen to one another with respect and without interruption.</p> <p>Encourage participation from all You may have to work harder to draw out quieter students. Comments such as, "good point," "excellent ideas," "great question," will be helpful.</p> <p>Provide a variety of discussion formats Some students find it hard to express their views in a large group but might feel more comfortable speaking out in a smaller group.</p> <p>Allow silence Don't feel you have to jump in every time there is a pause in the discussion. Silence can be valuable in allowing time for students to process information or collect their thoughts for a response.</p> <p>Consult outside resources When you don't know the answer to a question, try to find the information and provide it later. Student Handout Number 2 (Hotlines and Resource Numbers) may be helpful.</p>
<p>TIPS FOR USING THIS KIT</p>	

This kit is designed so you can teach your students the important facts about the Safely Surrendered Baby (SSB) Law in a very short time. You can also use these resources more

extensively if your schedule allows. Try these suggestions for using the kit to match the time you have available:

<p>Quickly Cover SSB Law Concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display the poster. • Review Teacher Resources in this kit and present a brief overview of the SSB Law to your students. • Copy and distribute Student Handouts 1 and 2 (Q&A and Hotlines); give each student an SSB Law wallet card. • Copy and assign Handout 3 (Worksheet) for homework or extra credit. <p>Cover Concepts in More Depth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display the poster. • Review Teacher Resources in this kit and present an overview of the SSB Law to your students and follow this with a class discussion (See Activity 1 on Handout 3: Student Worksheet). • Copy and distribute Student Handout 1 (Q&A) for review and group discussion. • Allow classroom time to complete additional activities on Handout 3: Student Worksheet. • Copy and distribute Handout 2 (Hotlines); give each student an SSB Law wallet card. <p>More Ideas for Using the Kit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud the story of an SSB Law child (on the inside back cover of this kit) as an “ice-breaker” for this topic or to spark discussion among your students. • Use key excerpts from the SSB Law resources in student bulletins, daily announcements and on your school’s website. • Organize an informal “brown bag lunch” discussion for students who wish to talk about the SSB Law together. • Involve parents by inviting students to take the SSB Law student handouts home to share with their families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform fellow teachers, librarians, counselors, coaches and others who work with young people about the SSB Law and how to receive additional Teacher Kits. <p>Curriculum Links: Making The Connection</p> <p>While the topics in this kit correlate naturally with health and sex education, the SSB Law can be related to several subject areas. Try the following ideas to make these curriculum connections:</p> <p>Fine Arts & Language Arts: Your students may be inspired to create posters, artwork, poems and music that depict themes and emotions related to the goals and successes of the SSB Law. See related activity number 4 on the Student Worksheet.</p> <p>Social Studies, Citizenship and Law: Use the SSB Law to introduce a discussion of the purpose and practice of state law generally. See related activity number 3 on the Student Worksheet.</p> <p>Life Skills: Encourage students to think about how the SSB Law may impact a teen who gives up an infant under this law. See related activity number 1 and 2 on the Student Worksheet.</p> <p>Mathematics: Practice statistics skills using national estimates provided about abandoned babies at http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats/abandon.htm. See related activity number 5 on the Student Worksheet.</p>
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HANDOUT #1

SAFELY SURRENDERED BABY LAW:

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the Safely Surrendered Baby Law?

It's a new law. Under this law, a person may surrender their baby confidentially without fear of arrest or prosecution for abandonment.

How does it work?

A distressed parent who is unable or unwilling to care for an infant can legally, confidentially, and safely surrender their baby within 3 days of birth. All that is required is that the baby be brought to a hospital emergency room in California.

A bracelet will be placed on the baby for identification. A matching bracelet will be given to the parent. The bracelet will help connect the parent to the baby if the parent wants the baby back.

Can only a parent bring in the baby?

In most cases, a parent will bring in the baby. The law allows another person to bring in the baby if they have lawful custody.

Does the parent have to call before bringing in the baby?

No. A parent can bring in a baby anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Does a parent have to tell anything to the people taking the baby?

No. Nothing is required. However, hospital personnel will give the parent a medical information questionnaire that is designed to gather family medical history. This could be very useful in caring for the child but it is the parent's choice to complete it.

What happens to the baby?

The baby will be examined and given medical treatment, if needed. Then the child will be placed in a foster or pre-adoptive home.

What happens to the parent?

Once the parent(s) has safely turned over the baby, they are free to go.

What if a parent wants the baby back?

Under the Safely Surrendered Baby law, a parent has at least 14 days to claim the baby. The parent(s) may take the bracelet back to the hospital. Hospital personnel will provide information about the baby.

Why is California doing this?

The purpose of the Safely Surrendered Baby Law is to protect babies from being hurt or killed because they were abandoned.

HANDOUT #2

MORE Q&A, HOTLINES & RESOURCES

<p>Why do parents abandon babies? Babies have been abandoned for many reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother's husband is not the father • Mother has other children, can't afford to take care of another • Fear of being abused if discovered • Fear of humiliation from unwed pregnancy • Fear of social services taking her other children • Fear of an ex-spouse taking custody • Fear of telling parents • Pregnancy discovered too late, no alternative of termination • Child is the result of a rape <p>The parents who experienced any of these circumstances have been under severe emotional distress. Because they were afraid and had nowhere to turn for help, they abandoned their babies.</p> <p>Will the Safely Surrendered Baby (SSB) Law prevent any more babies from being abandoned? The intent of the law is to prevent babies from being abandoned, but it's hard for a law to change the way a very frightened person may act. It is definitely helping. Between January 2001 and October 21, 2002, 52 children one year or younger were found abandoned.</p> <p>How many babies have been saved by the SSB Law? During this period, 11 infants were surrendered under the SSB Law.</p> <p>Is the SSB Law the only answer? No. Women may wish to consider either an adoption or an open adoption, where records</p>	<p>are kept and the possibility of future contact is maintained.</p> <p>If a mother wants to keep the baby but thinks she cannot really afford to care for another child, public assistance and food stamps may help. If a woman is afraid of abuse, the National Domestic Violence Hotline can help her. If a young girl is afraid of her parents, there are family services that offer help and counseling. Disease and complications can be avoided if the mother gets medical care before the baby is born. This sheet lists several resources that can help.</p> <p>These Numbers Can Help:</p> <p>National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE</p> <p>Child Help USA (Abuse Hotline) 1-800-422-4453</p> <p>National Council on Child Abuse and Family Violence 1-800-222-2000</p> <p>Public Assistance and Food Stamps For more information, contact your local county welfare department</p> <p>California Parents Anonymous 1-800-421-0353</p> <p>A MESSAGE FROM THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES Certainly we would prefer that women seek help while they are pregnant, not after giving birth, to receive proper medical care and counseling. But at the same time, we want to assure parents who choose not to keep their baby that they will not go to jail for abandoning their baby to safe hands in a hospital emergency room.</p>
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HANDOUT #3

STUDENT WORKSHEET

UNDERSTANDING THE LAW

Citizens and lawmakers in California wanted to protect unwanted babies from being hurt or killed because they were abandoned. This is the idea that led to the Safely Surrendered Baby (SSB) Law in California enacted January 1, 2001.

What did it take to turn a good idea into a law in our state? Use these ideas to research and answer this question:

- Use online and print resources in your library to investigate how laws are introduced and passed in California.
- Contact the office of your local state representative(s) for information or materials.
- Present your findings by writing a step-by-step list of the law-making process. Or create a flowchart that clearly illustrates this process.
- Be sure to include any interesting facts you find about how the SSB Law was enacted.

Expressing Your Feelings

You may experience many emotions as you learn about the challenges and successes

of the SSB Law. An unwanted pregnancy and giving up a baby are likely to cause anxiety, loneliness and sadness. On the other hand, a baby safely placed with a loving new family is an occasion for celebration, hope and happy anticipation.

- Use your talents to express an emotion you feel (happy or sad) about the SSB Law. Ideas: draw a picture, compose a song, write a poem to a baby surrendered under the SSB Law, or simply write your thoughts in your personal journal.
- If you wish, share what you create with your classmates.

Figuring It Out

Use your math skills to answer these questions:

- In 1998, 105 babies were abandoned in public places in the United States. 33 of these babies were found dead. What percentage of babies were found alive?
- California is one of only a few states that budgeted a marketing campaign to tell people about the SSB Law. In particular, the state wanted California females ages 14-38 to get the message. If there are 2 million females in this group and the marketing campaign reached 80% of them, how many females in this group did the campaign reach?

Talking About Your Ideas

The Safely Surrendered Baby (SSB) Law lets an individual give up an unwanted infant without fear of arrest or prosecution for abandonment. The law does not require that names be given when the baby is surrendered. Parents are permitted to bring a baby within 3 days of birth to any hospital emergency room or other designated safe haven in California. The baby will be placed in a foster or pre-adoptive home. Take a few minutes to think about why this new law is a good idea for California.

- How does the SSB Law help an unwanted baby?
- How does it help the baby's parents?
- Does this law also help other people? If so, who are they and how do they benefit?
- Can you think of any negative things about this law? If so, what are they?

Make brief notes about your answers to these questions and prepare to share your ideas during a discussion with other students in your class.

Using Your Powers of Persuasion

In this activity, your goal is to convince a fearful teenager to give up her unwanted newborn baby through the SSB Law. Review the SSB Law Q&A Handout to learn the facts you need to make a compelling argument.

Part 1

Role play with a partner. One partner takes the role of the distressed mother. The other partner is a friend who wants her to consider safely surrendering the baby at a hospital emergency room.

Spend 3 to 5 minutes playing these roles, then reverse roles and repeat the exercise. When you've completed this exercise, discuss these questions:

- What were the key facts you used to try to convince the mother to safely surrender the baby?
- How did you overcome any fears or objections voiced by the mother?
- Was your argument to the mother mainly emotional or rational? Why?

Part 2

Working with a group of classmates, design an advertising campaign that will convince new mothers to give up their unwanted infants through the SSB Law. Design the materials you think will capture the attention of your audience – a poster, bumper sticker, billboard, radio ad, TV spot, etc.

- Create a slogan, choose music and write a strong, clear message.
- When your work is complete, work with your group to present your campaign effectively to the rest of the class.

CALIFORNIA SAFELY SURRENDERED BABY LAW: OVERVIEW

The Problem

From 1991 to 1998, the incidence of child abandonment in public places increased 62%. Of the 105 children abandoned in public places in 1998, 33 were found dead.¹

In California, dramatic accounts in the newspapers and television underscored the problem. In March 1998, a baby was found by two 13-year old boys who saw her body floating face down in 14 feet of water in the California Aqueduct in Palmdale. The red-haired, 20 inch girl was tagged Baby Jane Doe No. 21. She was given the name "Grace". Sheriff's deputies initially thought she may have been strangled before being dumped, although they may never know for sure because the body was badly decomposed.

Similar tragedies were occurring in other states. The old child abandonment laws were not working. The legal ways to give up an unwanted child were too complex for scared, uninformed young mothers. People began looking for a way to solve the problem.

The Start of the Solution

In Alabama, a pilot program attempted a new legislative focus: protecting the child at practically any cost. On September 1, 1999, Texas was the first state to pass a law allowing a parent to give up an infant anonymously.² Other states began to follow with similar laws.

In September 2000, the California legislature passed the California Safely Surrendered Baby Law. Similar to other states, it allowed a parent to give up a child anonymously. On September 28, 2000, Governor Gray Davis signed it into law. On January 1, 2001, the law went into effect.

The Law's Main Points and Conditions:

The intent of the law is to assure the safety of the unwanted babies.

- Allows a distressed birth parent(s) to legally, confidentially, and safely surrender their baby.
- Provides a safe place for babies.
- Protects the parent(s) from arrest or prosecution for abandonment.
- Does not require that names be given when the baby is surrendered.
- Permits parents to bring a baby within 3 days of birth to any hospital emergency room in California.
- Allows the parent at least 14 days to reclaim the baby.
- Provides that a coded, confidential ankle bracelet be placed on the child and a copy given to the surrendering parent to facilitate reclaiming in the future.
- Allows the surrendering parent to complete a medical history questionnaire for the child.

What happens to the baby?

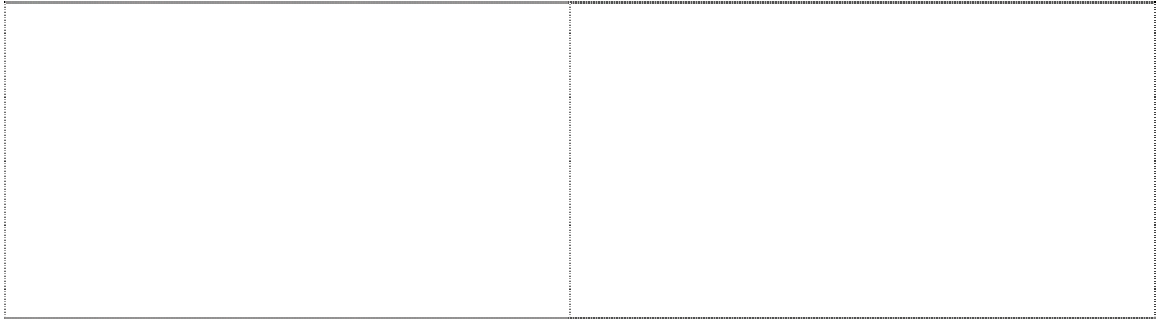
The hospital examines the infant and provides medical treatment if necessary. Hospital personnel will give the parent a medical information questionnaire that is designed to gather family medical history. This could be very useful in caring for the child.

Once the parent(s) has safely turned over the baby, they are free to go. Then the child is placed in a foster or pre-adoptive home.

1 United States Department of Health and Human Services, The Administration for Children and Families.

<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats/abandon.htm>

2 www.babymoses.org



INSIDE BACK COVER

A Safely Surrendered Baby in California

At 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, July 25, 2002, a healthy newborn baby was brought to St. Bernardine Medical Center in San Bernardino under the provisions of the California Safely Surrendered Baby Law.

This baby was another child protected under California's Safely Surrendered Baby Law. As the law states, the baby's mother did not have to identify herself. When the baby was brought to the emergency room, he was examined by a pediatrician and was healthy and doing fine. He was placed in a foster home for short-term care while the adoption process was started.

Every baby deserves a chance for a healthy life. If you or someone you know is considering giving up a child, learn about your options.

The California Safely Surrendered Baby Law:

Allows a distressed birth parent(s) to legally, confidentially, and safely surrender their baby

Provides a safe place for babies

Protects the parent(s) from arrest or prosecution for abandonment

Does not require that names be given when the baby is surrendered

Permits parents to bring a baby within 3 days of birth to any hospital emergency room in California

In California, no one ever has to abandon a child again.

State of California

Gray Davis, Governor

Health and Human Services Agency

Grantland Johnson, Secretary

Department of Social Services

Rita Saenz, Director